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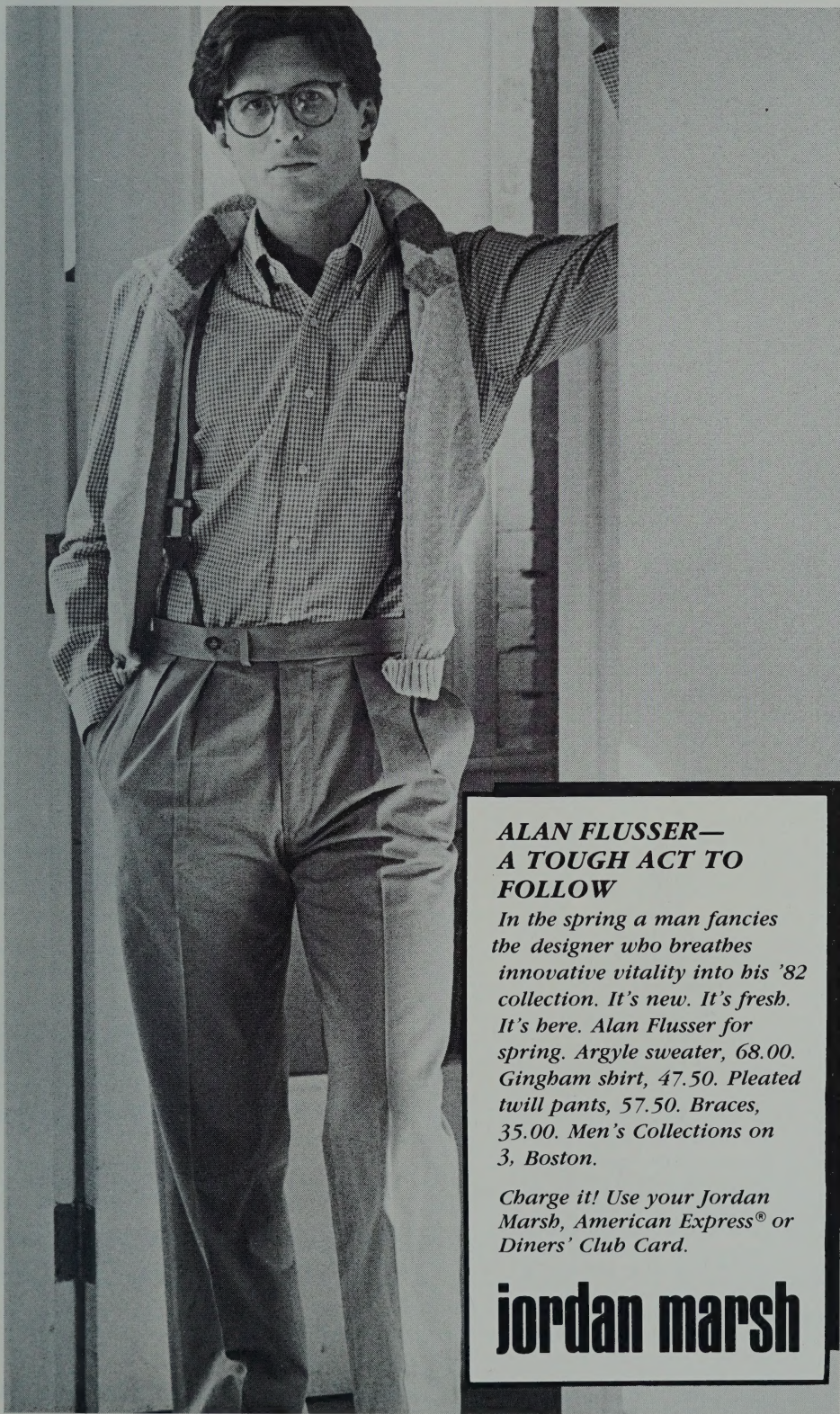

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Volume 2, Number 1 **January 1982**

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A pictorial representation of this evening's program.

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Mary Chalon: A Boston Girl Gone New York

by Herbert Swartz

"Look at my life. It just shows if you get out there and take risks, it can happen. If it hadn't been for Miss America, I would still be back in Denton, [Texas]."

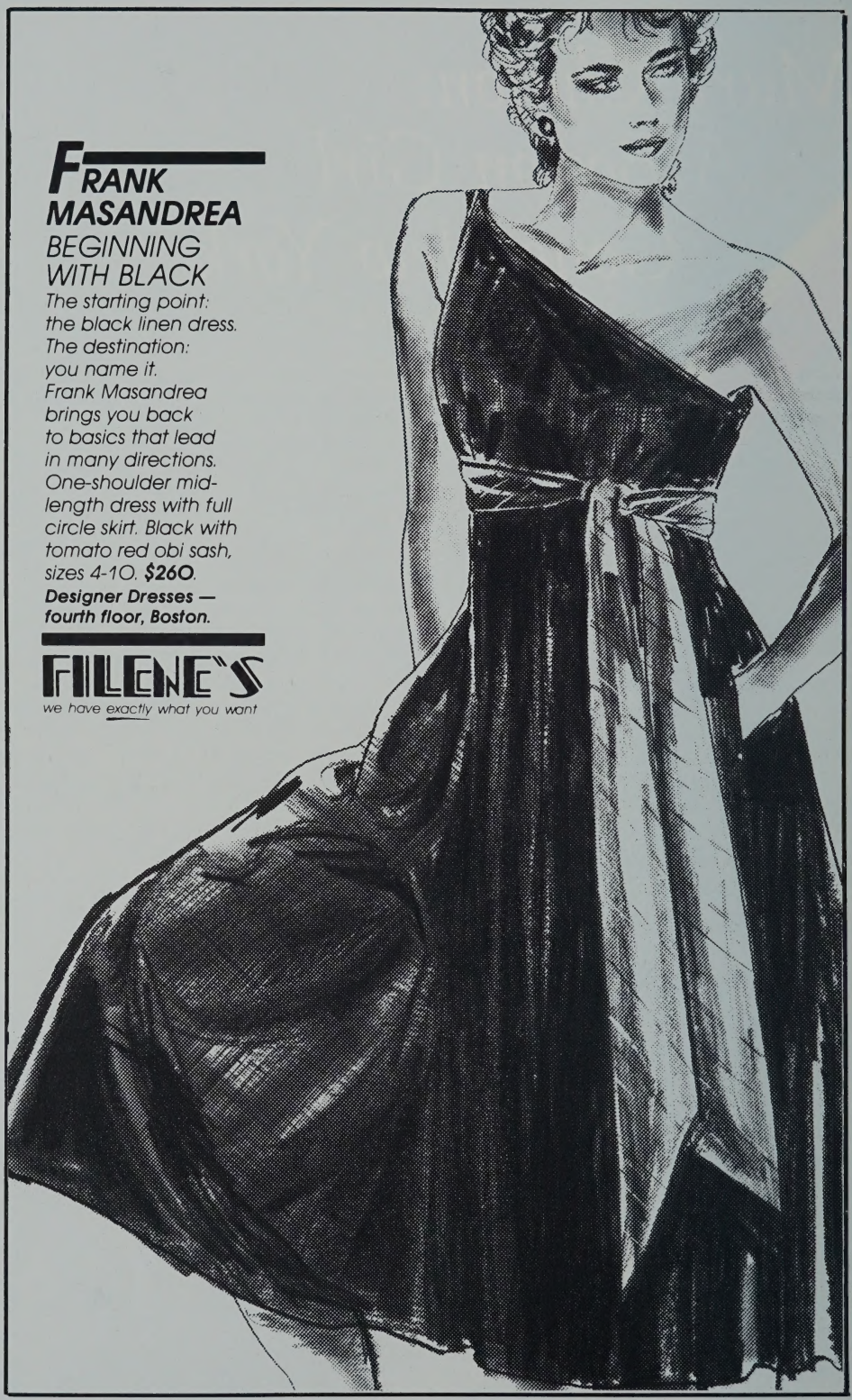
Phyllis George Brown, former Miss America, co-star of CBS's football show, The NFL Today

Former Boston-based actress Mary Chalon got out there and took risks. But she's still waiting for "it" to happen. Nine months ago she packed up and moved to New York. She felt she couldn't grow as an actress here anymore, and needed the theater experience of *the* big city. That's where people get the big breaks. It's where off-off-Broadway gets tipped by the magic wand of critics and becomes . . . Broadway. It's the stuff of paperback novels.

Chalon, a stunning 31-year-old redhead, lives week to week on a paycheck from Broadway Bay. It's one

(Continued on page 25.)

Photo by Ann Marie Rousseau.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Thursday, January 14, 1982, at 8:00 p.m.
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Jeanne Ommerlé, *soprano*
Thomas Dunn, *conducting*

Handel The Water Music (Suite I in F Major)

1. Ouverture [in the French Style]
2. Adagio e staccato
3. Allegro-Andante-Allegro
4. Menuet
5. Air
6. Menuet
7. Bourrée
8. [Andante]
9. Hornpipe

Haydn Cantata — Miseri noi! misera Patria, *Hob. xxiva:7*
Aria — Son pietosa, son bonina, *Hob. xxxii:1b*
Miss Ommerlé

Intermission

Handel The Water Music (Suite III in G Major)

1. [Menuet]
2. Rigaudon
3. Menuet
4. Gigue

Haydn Scena di Berenice, *Hob. xxiva:10*
Miss Ommerlé

Handel The Water Music (Suite II in D Major)

1. [Overture in the Italian Style]
2. Alla Hornpipe
3. Menuet
4. Lentement [Loure]
5. Bourrée

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Notes

by Joseph Dyer

Joseph Haydn's versatility turned out to be more impressive than could have been suspected at the time he joined the Esterházy court in 1760. He was engaged as Vice-Kapellmeister to compose secular instrumental music, maintain the music library, perform administrative duties and give limited musical instruction. Opera, though not neglected in the comprehensive program of entertainment demanded by Prince Nicolaus, occupied at first a status secondary to orchestral and chamber music. Haydn was quite proud of his operas, however, and in a brief autobiographical sketch written in 1776 he mentioned three operas among his most important works.

At about this same time, Prince Nicolaus developed a particular fondness for opera, particularly comic opera. Thus the new role of operatic impresario was thrust upon the Kapellmeister (for Haydn had been promoted at the death of his predecessor). At its high-water mark in 1786, the busy operatic season at Esterháza saw a total of 125 performances of 17 operas, 8 of them court premieres. Even the conflagration which destroyed the theater and performance material in 1779 proved to be only a temporary inconvenience.

Haydn did not have the highest regard for the Italian opera composers of his day. He freely adapted, rewrote and supplemented their works to bring them into line with his own taste. The three arias on this evening's program stem from this emendation practice, which was well nigh universal in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century opera houses.

The original function of "Miseri noi" in this context has yet to be established. Its text, a fairly standard lament for a city destroyed by an invader, would suit an *opera seria*. The "cantata" (as it is sometimes called) consists of a long accompan-

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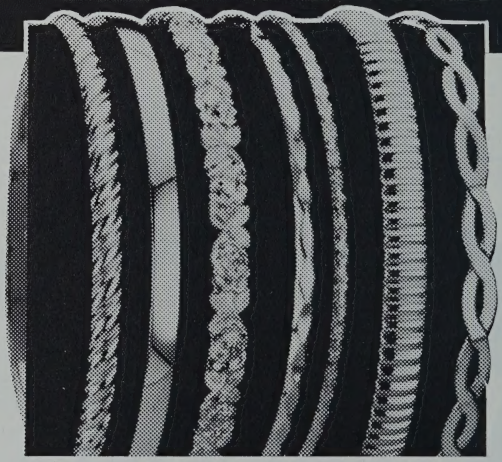

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ied recitative and a bipartite aria (Adagio assai-Allegro moderato). Its date of composition cannot be later than 1790, and a manuscript of the piece accompanied Haydn to London.

In 1789 Haydn put together a pasticcio, *La Circe*, from two repertoire operas and numerous insertions of his own composition. One of the arias for this production was the charming and ingenuous song of the maid Lindora: "Son pietosa, son bonina." From the vocal range and style — lyric first part and parlando conclusion — it has been surmised that Haydn intended the piece for his mistress in the Esterháza troupe, Luigia Polzelli. Haydn also took this coquettish song with him to England, where he gave a copy of it to a female admirer.

During his second trip to London, Haydn composed the impressive *Scena di Berenice* to words of Metastasio (*Antigono* III.vii). Brigida Banti performed this masterpiece for the first time (not altogether satisfactorily in the composer's view) at Haydn's last benefit concert. This concert, on May 4, 1795, also featured the premiere of the "London" Symphony. The whole event was a great success, as Haydn recorded in his diary: "I made four thousand Gulden on this evening. Such a thing is possible only in England."

* * *

The Water Music suites were composed before 1717, the date of the celebrated royal boating party on the Thames when Handel's music accompanied George I on a trip from London to Chelsea. Suites of orchestral dances, like the Bach suites, served as functional background music for dining and other court festivities. Handel's scoring for a full band of winds and strings in the Water Music is truly sumptuous: "a very fine consort of music," as it was described in a contemporary account.

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Cantata — Miseri noi, misera Patria
Recitativo

Miseri noi!
Pity us!
Misera Patria!
Pity our country!
Ah! qualiti sovrastan ruine!
See the ruins!
Ah! veder parmi le tue mure distrutte!
See your walls destroyed!
Il ferro, il foco, inondar le tue strade, arder le mure l'altare incenerir.
See your streets drenched in blood and fire, your altars ablaze.
I padri . . . i figli . . . i mariti . . . le spose . . . i dolci amici abbracciarsi e fuggir.
Fathers, sons, husbands, wives, friends: embrace and flee.

Sentomi intorno i gemiti indistinti.
Vaguely I hear the faint moaning.
Odo le tronche languide notte
I sense the waning night,
ascolto i singulti . . . i sospiri, e nel commun dolore,
I hear the sobs and sighs
gli accenti di chi cade e di chi muore.
the cries of the fallen and the dying.

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Aria

Funesto orror di morte
Death and horror
torbido annunzia il giorno
announce the dawning day.
queruli accenti intorno.
Moaning voices of the dying
ascolto a risuonar.
all around I hear.

Già la fatal sua sorte
The treacherous victor's fatal laugh
del vincitor per gioco
foretells our lot,
va fra le stragi
rings through the slaughter
e il foco ciascuno ad incontrar.
to greet the suffering and the dying.

Aria — Son pietosa, son bonina

Son pietosa, son bonina,
Kind and generous, and well-mannered,
piena son di cortesia,
Full of good and courteous bearing,
e pur deggio, poverina,
Still, tis said how much I suffer;
tante pene sopportar.
Great the pains I still must bear.

O, povere femmine,
Poor women, believe me,
credetelo a me:
Men always deceive ye,
v'ingannano gl'omini,
Love seek not in constancy:
costanza non v'è.
Love cannot long be.

E pur, semplicette,
The plain fact remaining,
a tutto si crede.
And all can believe this:
E finto l'amore
When loving is finished,
è falsa la fede,
And faith turns to falsehood,
più amore non v'è.
Is: love cannot be.

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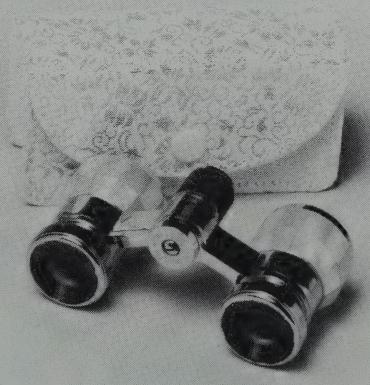

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Scena di Berenice [Antigono, Act III. Scene 7 — Pietro Metastasio]

Berenice, che fai? Muore il tuo bene,
Berenice, what are you doing? Your lover is dying,
Stupida, e tu non corri! . . . Oh Dio! vacilla
Foolish girl, why are you not running to him? O God!
L'incerto passo; un gelido mi scuote
My steps falter; fear, like ice
Insolito tremor tutte le vene,
Freezes in my veins,
E a gran pena il suo peso il piè sostiene.
And I can scarcely stand up
under the weight of my troubles.
Dove son? Qual confusa
Where am I? What morbid follies
Folla d'idee tutte funeste adombra
Cloud my mind?
La mia ragion? Veggo Demetrio; il veggo
I see Demetrius, my lover,
Che in atto di ferir . . . Fermati; vivi:
about to stab himself . . . Stop . . . live;
D'Antigono io sarò. Del core ad onta
I'll submit to Antigono. I'll hurry to him
Volo a giurargli fè: dirò che l'amo
And say that I love him; I'll swear to be faithful to him;
Diro . . . Misera me, s'oscura il giorno!
I'll say . . . pity me, day turns to night!
Balena il ciel! L'hanno irritato i miei
Lightning sears the sky!
Meditati spergiuri. Ahimè! lasciate
My lying has caused it.
Ch'io soccorra il mio ben, barbari Dei.
Help me, ye gods, to help my love. Cruel gods,
Voi m'impedite, e intanto
Why do you hold me back?
Forse un colpo improvviso . . .
Perhaps a sudden blow . . .
Ah sarete contenti: eccolo ucciso.
Are you satisfied? is he dead already?
Aspetta, anima bella: ombre compagne
Wait, gentle soul! let our souls be together
A Lete andrem. Se non potei salvarti,
In their journey to Lethe. If I cannot save you,
Potrò fedel . . .
I shall be faithful . . .
Ma tu mi guardi e parti!
but are you looking at me as you go?

Non partir, bell'idol mio;
Do not go, my handsome love;
Per quell'onda — all'altra sponda
Through the waves — to yonder shore
Voglio anch'io passar con te.
I would cross with thee.
Voglio anch'io . . .
I want it too.
Me infelice!
Woe is me!
Che fingo? che ragiono?
Why am I pretending? what am I saying?

Dove rapita io sono
Where has the torrent of my suffering
Dal torrente crudel de' miei martiri?
Carried me?
Misera Berenice, ah tu deliri!
Miserable Berenice, you are delirious!
Perchè, se tanti siete
Why, if you are so many,
Che delirar mi fate,
Do you not kill me
Perchè non m'uccidete,
Or make me go mad,
Affanni del mio cor?
O ye torments of my heart?
Crescete, oh Dio, crescete,
Increase, O ye Gods, increase
Fin che mi porga aita
These tortures, so that soon
Con togliermi di vita
My life will end
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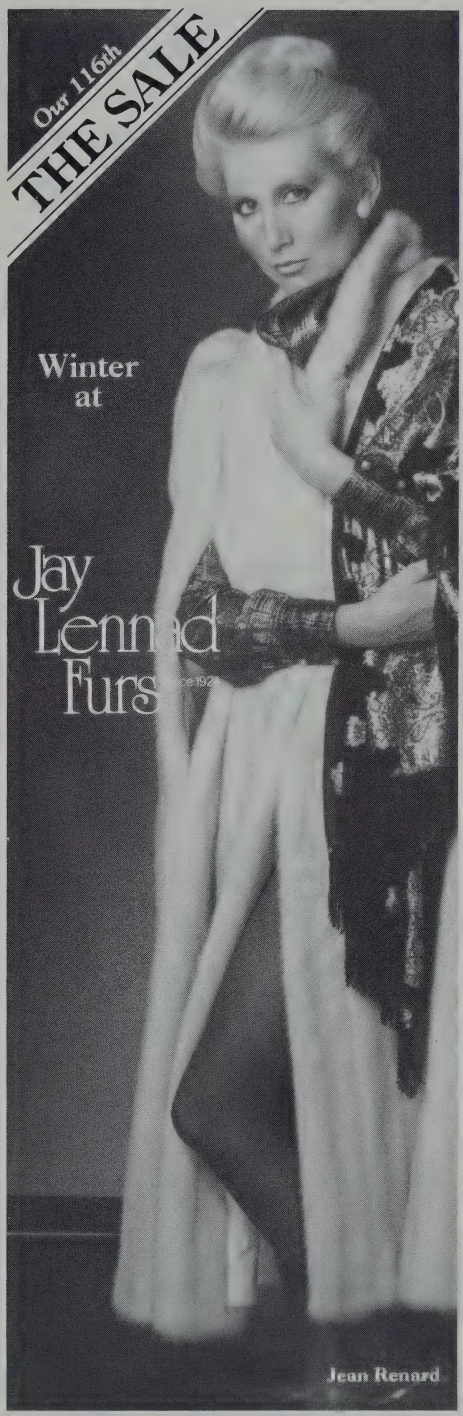

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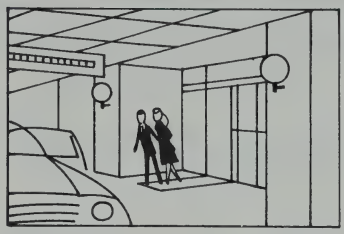

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H&H Fund Drive to Start

For the first time in its 167-year history, Handel & Haydn will conduct a fund-raising campaign by telephone this spring. Members, subscribers and friends of H&H will be asked to join in an effort to raise $75,000, the amount needed to balance this season's budget. Approximately $46,000 has already been raised or pledged. These funds are essential not only for the ongoing activities of the Society, but also for the broadcasts, recordings and educational programs now in the planning stage.

H&H derives 70 percent of its annual budget from ticket sales (this proportion is well above the average for orchestras with similar budgets in the U.S.). As a result of the vigorous expansion that has taken place in the last three seasons, H&H has increased its audience by 277 percent and has tripled the number of subscription concerts. Two years ago, H&H had 1,400 subscribers; now it has more than 5,500. L. Edward Lashman, Chairman of the Handel & Haydn Development Committee and Director of External Projects at the Office of the Financial Vice President at Harvard University, explained, "Ticket sales are a really triumphant indication of public support."

Discussing the current climate of support for the arts, Lashman stated, "In general, the arts have always been supported by private giving. There is little government funding in this country, but it's critical money. If it does get cut, it will have to be taken up by private donors or the arts will disappear. That would be a tragedy."

Mr. Lashman, who calls Handel & Haydn "the best musical bargain in town," concluded, "The hope we have is that people who have shown their warm support will reach into their pockets and contribute generously to what Handel & Haydn does uniquely."

The Handel & Haydn TeleFund is scheduled for early March 1982. Those interested in volunteering as callers should contact Catherine Coombs at the H&H office (617) 266-3605.

HANDEL & HAYDN AT SYMPHONY HALL

Thomas Dunn, *Artistic Director*
167th Season, 1981–1982

Calendar of Events

Thursday, February 11, 1982, at 8:00 p.m.
Saturday, February 13, 1982, at 8:00 p.m.

Haydn — Theresienmesse

Mozart — Epistle Sonata, K. 244

Poulenc — Organ Concerto in G Minor
Leonard Raver, *organ*

Tickets $16 $11 ($6 sold out)

Wednesday, March 24, 1982, at 8:00 p.m.
Friday, March 26, 1982, at 8:00 p.m.

Haydn — Symphony No. 85, *La Reine*

Haydn — Symphony No. 83, *La Poule*

Haydn — Symphony No. 82, *L'ours*

Stravinsky — Dumbarton Oaks Concerto

Tickets $16 $11 ($6 sold out)

Call **266-3605** for ticket information.

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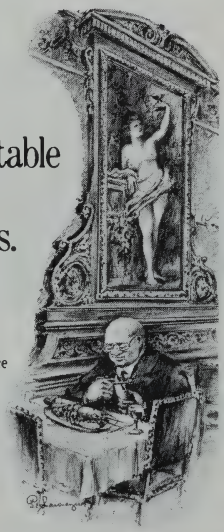

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Handel & Haydn Historical Highlights

The fame of the Handel & Haydn Society spread far afield in the nineteenth century, but not without some misunderstanding, as this letter addressed to "Messrs. Handell and Hayden, Musicians, Boston, Mass." indicates:

Clarksburg, Va., July 27, 1850.
Messrs. Handell and Hayden

Gentlemen. Hearing from a gentleman lately from Boston, that you were the instructors of a musical society in that place, I take the liberty of addressing you a few lines for the purpose of obtaining some information regarding your Society, and you will please excuse the liberty I have taken, as I am an entire stranger to you. I wish to know the terms upon which you take scholars for instruction, and whether you take any for their services, who have not the means to pay for their tuition. I have thought lately of cultivating my taste for music, which I think is very good, or at least tolerably good. The first time I attempted, I could play a tune on the violin, and in three or four days I could play most any tune I knew except some difficult waltzes or reels. I can play on the flute as well, or very nearly as well, as our best performers, and some of them have been to our fashionable watering-places playing. Besides playing on several bass instruments, on the accordion and the piano, but I never tried the piano but once, and I played a tune on it then. I can play some ten or twelve instruments all together. Please let me hear from you soon, and if your terms suit, I can give you most any number of certificates of my musical talents. Awaiting your answer, I remain yours faithfully.

In 1900, the Handel and Haydn Society offered the first oratorio performance in the new Symphony Hall. Financial support for its construction was solicited with the argument that "the choral societies must have a good home or fade away, and the Symphony Orchestra . . . must very soon disband unless a home for it is assured."

In 1854 a ticket valid for all concerts of the Handel and Haydn Society throughout the season cost two dollars. A highlight of the season was the appearance of Guilia Grisi and the tenor Mario (both singers past their prime) in Rossini's *Sabat Mater.* Carl Zerrahn conducted the Society for the first time; he retired in 1895.

The first concert of the Handel and Haydn Society took place on the evening of December 25, 1815, in what is now King's Chapel. The Act of Incorporation and Bye [sic] Laws were approved by the General Court the following February "for the purpose of extending the knowledge and improving the style of performance of church music."

The initial funding of the Handel and Haydn Society amounted to $53 in donations. A source of additional income during the early years was the *Handel and Haydn Collection of Church Music* (1820), edited by Lowell Mason.

The Audience are requested to abstain from applause. Loud complaints from those desirous of hearing the LAST CHORUS, and from those exposed to the draft of air near the doors, induces the Society to request the Audience to keep their seats during its performance.

—*notice in an 1851* Elijah *program at the Boston Music Hall*

For many years the Society kept alive plans for its own building and concert hall. The project was first mentioned in 1824, and by 1931 more than eighty thousand dollars had accumulated in the Building Fund. This amount was then transferred to the Permanent Fund so that interest on it could be used to support musical activities.

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Sat. & Sun., 4:00pm-Midnight.
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☐ I prefer to remain anonymous.

(Continued from page 7)

of a string of new restaurants on Manhattan's upper west side — cute, cozy, and romantic. As the hostess, she makes $35 a night plus a meal.

Not much besides acting matters to Mary Chalon. She's driven and searching at the same time. When *Theatrebill* caught up with her she was moving from one apartment to another . . . for the rest of the month.

But more important to Mary Chalon that month was that she had the lead in a new off-off-Broadway play, *The Inscrutable West*.

This followed work on a few "soaps," work as a receptionist, and her latest job at Broadway Bay. It has been tough.

At her *one* Broadway try-out, a producer suggested commercials. "Great set of choppers, kid," he told her. "Just right for toothpaste."

In Boston Mary Chalon made a living acting and had the encouragement of local critics and directors. In fact, exactly nine months and one day before she opened in New York, *The Boston Globe*'s Kevin Kelly wrote a story about her and her exodus. For better than a decade she was a fixture at local theaters: *And Never Said A Word* at Stage One, *The Belle of Amherst* at Caravan, *The Yellow Wallpaper* at the Boston Arts Group, *A Christmas Carol* at the Charles Playhouse, and a host of other credits.

Reviews were uniformly excellent. As Boston director Kaleel Sakakeeny described her performances, "There is an aura, a presence, about Mary Chalon that very few actresses have."

But "actresses must act," as Kelly reported, and for Chalon, that meant New York.

As she said of her Boston days, "I remember years ago I felt such a strong belief and commitment towards Boston. We were just going to knock over all the people in town. It was a very exciting time. It took me a long time to accept the fact that perhaps things were at a level that was adequate and good, but that couldn't take me beyond where I could be.

(Continued on next page)

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"You come here with fixed ideas, and I'm still learning. You come here and tend to think that everybody is going to be a graduate of the Neighborhood Playhouse. Everybody's going to shoot for really high-quality stuff — and they don't.

"Everybody in the world is here: the very bad, the mediocre, and the very best. It's a learning process. It took me many years in Boston, which is a small city, to know who the good directors are, who I should go to, who I should work with. It wasn't so much that I wanted to go to New York as that I *had* to come to New York."

But New York meant that those old Boston days of "end a play one day and start out on another the next" were gone.

The last rehearsal for *The Inscrutable West* ended in the early morning of opening day. Mary Chalon, thin to begin with, had lost weight. When she left the theater, she had $14 to her name, ten dollars in her wallet and $4 in the bank. She was very, very tired, and very, very hungry. The last week of rehearsals kept her from her paying job — no pay came with the off-off-Broadway part — so she didn't have any money for food. Rehearsals lasted 10 hours or more, and the occasional freebies of cheese, crackers, and coffee sustained her.

Marion Geller, playwright and producer of *The Inscrutable West*, said of Mary, "I was struck right away with Mary Chalon. She was definitely one of the people to call back — her professionalism, her outgoing attitude, her looks, her sense of humor, her presence."

There seemed about it all such a sense of unreality. Mary Chalon, who stood out in a sea of 400 faces at the audition, couldn't even buy herself lunch.

As Alexis Greene, lecturer on dramatic criticism and theater at Hunter College, points out, "The stage, the theater, has always had those two sides to it: the masochistic side, the going out and getting work, the rehearsing, the exploring of yourself, and then the gratification which comes from the creating of a role."

On the night Mary Chalon opened,

Other Stages, the biweekly bible of non-Broadway theater, listed 185 other shows from which theatergoers and critics could choose. Thirty-six people chose this play.

The play opened. No glamour, no flash. In fact, it was pretty drab. When it ended the company gathered in the darkened theater to hear a lengthy critique by director Peter Link. After that Chalon and a couple of other cast members went out for a beer, and then home. There were no parties, flowers, telegrams, or families on hand to offer congratulations.

The next day, Chalon slept until early afternoon. Opening night had come and gone, and Chalon's mask of fatigue had disappeared.

"My driving desire is not to have a great deal of money, or to have my name up in lights. I don't feel that would make me happy. But having my name up in lights *if* I deserve it, and having work that I do be good, that would be terrific. It would make me feel like home."

"I've always said about an actor," director Link concludes, "that when God took the needle of life and slipped it into him, he slipped and gave him too much. So the only way an actor can get off that extra energy is to get up there on the stage."

For Chalon acting is art, and despite the frustrations, it is all she wants. But Cynthia Lee Jenner, editor of *Other Stages*, does not see it all so purely romantic. "I've never met an actor yet who came to New York to serve the theater or his art. They all come for the same thing: fame and fortune. The title of John Guare's play [*Rich and Famous*] says it all."

Chalon's co-star in *The Inscrutable West*, Fred McGrath, a young Kirk Douglas look-alike who has been acting and writing in the midwest and California since leaving Holliston, Mass., more than 10 years ago, takes issue: "One side of this business has to be the artistic side which we cherish. That is the core of why you keep coming back — at least I do. It's what I love to do. It gives you that feeling you get when you're up in a swing and you get that tingle. I've never gotten that in a commercial and I've made lots of money in commercials . . . . The impetus

(Continued on page 30)

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Tickets as Gifts. If you are a subscriber unable to attend a concert, we encourage you to give your tickets as gifts or return them to H&H as a tax-deductible donation. If we can resell them, we will send a letter acknowledging your contribution for tax purposes.

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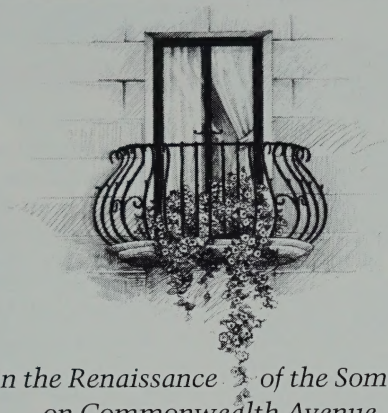

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(Continued from page 27)

to do the kind of work that you can't produce any other way, whether it's off Broadway or on Broadway. Just the things for which you don't take money, for which you have to take a chance."

One of the other stars of *The Inscrutable West* is Elizabeth Flynn-Jones. At 35, she already has 23 years in the theater, the last eight in New York. "Anybody can work in community theater, in their hometown, and never get stretched or make yourself happy. Never test yourself. Never really test yourself to see exactly what you are. I came to New York to try to see that exactly."

Chalon elaborated. "Last night, I felt as if I had been out in a boat on the ocean for nine months with no land in sight. Finally I managed to spot a piece of land, but I haven't gotten to the point yet where I have found the beauty of the land and the kind of things that I'm really seeking here."

Later that afternoon Mary Chalon went down to the New Dramatists building on West 44th Street where a friend's short monologue was among several to be performed by writers, directors, and actors before an audience of writers, directors, and actors.

Just outside the building, she found a $20 bill on the sidewalk. It was one of those ironies in life that makes novelists despair over ever mastering their art; of knowing they can never hurdle the charge of being labeled contrived.

Mary Chalon is not contrived, however. She is real, and like a child in the park, she was jumping, jumping up and down on the sidewalk with the $20 bill in her hand. It was Friday afternoon and the next meal wasn't certain until early Monday evening at Broadway Bay. But Mary Chalon was happy, literally jumping for joy. "I didn't know how I was going to go to acting class on Sunday night. I didn't have money to pay for it. Now I do."

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"And," he interrupted, "if this begins a new career for us, we'll owe that all to Jason's, too."

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